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Saint Helena

Working paper prepared by the Secretariat

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Note: The information contained in the present working paper has been derived from public sources, including those of the territorial Government, and from information transmitted to the Secretary-General by the administering Power under Article 73 *e* of the Charter of the United Nations. Information was transmitted by the administering Power on 8 December 2016. Further details are contained in previous working papers, available from www.un.org/en/decolonization/workingpapers.shtml.

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The Territory at a glance

Territory: Saint Helena, Ascension and Tristan da Cunha, a Non-Self-Governing Territory under the Charter of the United Nations, is administered by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Representative of administering Power: Governor Lisa Phillips (since April 2016).

Geography: Saint Helena is a small island of volcanic origin situated in the South Atlantic Ocean, approximately 1,900 km from Angola and 2,900 km from Brazil. Ascension lies 1,200 km to the north-west of Saint Helena, and Tristan da Cunha and the other small islands lie approximately 2,400 km to the south.

Land area: 310 km^2, consisting of the islands of Saint Helena and Ascension and the Tristan da Cunha group.

Exclusive economic zone: 1,641,294 km^2.

Population: 4,534 on Saint Helena (February 2016 census); 889 on Ascension (September 2016 estimate) and 268 on Tristan da Cunha (November 2015 estimate).

Life expectancy at birth: 75.7 years (women: 78.8 years, men: 72.9 years (2016 estimate))

Language: English.

Capital: Jamestown (Saint Helena), Georgetown (Ascension), Edinburgh of the Seven Seas (Tristan da Cunha).

Main political parties: None.

Elections: Most recent: Saint Helena: July 2013; Ascension: September 2016; Tristan da Cunha: March 2016.

Legislature: Unicameral Legislative Council on Saint Helena (15 seats, 12 elected members). Under the 2009 Constitution, the Governor, acting after consultation with the Island Council, may make laws for Ascension and Tristan da Cunha.

Gross domestic product per capita: £7,390 (Saint Helena 2014/15 estimate). According to the administering Power, because it has no permanent population, there is no gross domestic product for Ascension and data are unavailable for Tristan da Cunha.

Economy: Fishing, coffee, tourism, the sale of postage stamps. The economy of Saint Helena depends on financial assistance from the United Kingdom, as well as stamp sales, fishing and a small amount of tourism (entry permits, conservation tours). For Ascension, financial assistance is received from the United Kingdom and the main source of revenue is derived through taxes and business levies, with additional revenue from fishing, sales of stamps and coins, handicrafts and tourism. Tristan da Cunha receives some financial assistance from the United Kingdom for education, health care and public service training.

Unemployment rate: 0.35 per cent (October 2016 estimate), down from 1.8 per cent in 2008 for Saint Helena. On Ascension people must be employed to stay on the island, except for children and adult dependants. Full employment applies for Tristan da Cunha.

Monetary unit: Saint Helena pound, which is pegged to the pound sterling (Saint Helena and Ascension); pound sterling (Tristan da Cunha).

Brief history: The island of Saint Helena was reportedly discovered in 1502 by a Spanish navigator in the service of Portugal. By the end of the sixteenth century, it had become a port of call for ships en route from Europe to the East Indies. In 1633, it was formally annexed by the Netherlands. However, in 1659 the British East India Company took possession of the island. It officially became a Crown colony in 1833, was classified as a British dependent territory in 1981 and became a British overseas territory in 2002.

I. Constitutional, legal and political developments

1. The current Constitution of Saint Helena, Ascension and Tristan da Cunha, which entered into force in September 2009, provides for the protection of the fundamental rights and freedoms of the individual. The new Constitution changed the name of the Territory from "Saint Helena and its Dependencies" to "Saint Helena, Ascension and Tristan da Cunha", giving the three islands equal status within the Territory. The Head of the Government is the Governor, who is appointed by the British Crown. However, the ability of the Governor to act inconsistently with the wishes of elected councillors is curtailed in comparison with the previous Constitution. The British Overseas Territories Act 2002 grants British citizenship to "British overseas territory citizens" providing that certain qualifications are met.

2. The Legislative Council on Saint Helena comprises the Speaker, the Deputy Speaker, three ex officio members (the Chief Secretary, the Financial Secretary and the Attorney General) and 12 elected members. The Executive Council, which is presided over by the Governor, consists of the ex officio members and five elected members from the Legislative Council. The ex officio members have no vote in either body. Elections are held by secret ballot, at intervals of not more than four years, by universal suffrage of those aged 18 years and over.

3. The 2009 Constitution contains enhanced provisions for ensuring the independence of the judiciary from the legislative and executive branches of the Government. The judicial system comprises the Court of Appeal, the Supreme Court and subordinate courts (currently the Magistrates' Court and the Labour Regulating Authority, to determine employment claims, others may be established by ordinance) and the Coroner, to investigate certain sudden or suspicious deaths. There remains a final appeal to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in prescribed circumstances. The Media Commission has been established by ordinance and deals with complaints about breaches of the media codes of practice.

II. Budget

4. Owing to a small tax base due in part to migration and an ageing population, Saint Helena depends heavily on the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland for funding. The European Union also provides budgetary support. According to information provided by the administering Power, total budgetary aid and shipping support from the Government of the United Kingdom reached £22.5 million for the financial year 2016/17, compared with £19.43 million during the previous period, representing an increase of 13.6 per cent. The 2016/17 aid package was approved in March 2016, following a visit to Saint Helena by representatives of the Department for International Development. Discussions for the next budget review, which will cover a three-year period, began in November 2016.

III. Economic conditions

A. General

5. The largest employer is the Government of Saint Helena. South Africa and the United Kingdom are the two largest sources of imports. The next largest sector for employment is retail and services. The local population also earns income from fishing, raising livestock and selling handicrafts. According to the administering Power, unemployment is very low at present, with new jobs currently available as a result of the building of the airport, the redevelopment of Rupert's Wharf and other infrastructure development. Consequently, incomes have grown strongly over the past three years, a period during which inflation has decreased significantly, with growth of the retail price index averaging 1.6 per cent from the fourth quarter in 2015 to the third quarter in 2016. Nevertheless, incomes remain comparatively low, and the cost of living is high, given that most goods must be imported. Consequently, prices are heavily influenced by external factors. According to the administering Power, Saint Helena expects that, once international air services begin to operate from its newly built airport, the significant increase in the number of visitors will help to develop the economy.

B. Development

6. Saint Helena is eligible to receive budget support from the European Union through the tenth European Development Fund, as are Ascension and Tristan da Cunha. Under the eleventh European Development Fund, the Territory has been granted an indicative amount of €21.5 million for the period 2014-2020. Saint Helena, Ascension and Tristan da Cunha also receive a proportion of the €5 million reserved by the Fund for isolated territories and can benefit from regional funding.

7. Disaster management and the response to major incidents and emergencies are managed through the Chief of Police, who serves as the Emergency Planning Coordinator. Working with the Governor, the Chief of Police and his emergency planning team have developed the island's first major incident response plan, supported by the island risk register. Multi-agency work has developed significantly through the creation of the Saint Helena Resilience Forum (replacing the Disaster Management Committee). The major incident response plan has been tested through a broad range of exercises and real-time incidents. Such incidents have included emerging risks, for example drought, as well as more immediate issues, such as rock falls and emergency responses to the new airport. Emergency planning on the island has been supplemented by the development of a local emergency planning officer who has been trained in the United Kingdom.

8. In 2016, a 10-year plan was developed for the period 2017-2027. According to the administering Power, the challenges beyond the immediate priority of achieving air access are as follows: (a) supporting adults with additional needs; (b) better and less expensive Internet services; (c) reducing high energy costs and switching to renewable energy; (d) implementing preventive and proactive models in health and education; (e) increasing the workforce to stimulate economic growth; (f) adopting sustainable and ethical development; (g) maintaining improvements made to core

services, such as safeguarding and health; (h) protecting vulnerable people; (i) improving the skills of Saint Helenians to take on more leadership roles; and (j) maintaining access to the island for people and goods. Particular challenges are caused by the ageing population, outward migration of labour to work mainly on the Falklands Islands (Malvinas)[1] and Ascension, and limited employment options, which makes recruitment difficult.

C. Fisheries and agriculture

9. Fisheries are an important sector of the economy of Saint Helena. According to the United Kingdom, five inshore boats fished there regularly in 2016. Local fishers sell their catch to the Saint Helena Fisheries Corporation. Fish purchases for the period from January to October 2016 amounted to 347.50 tons, compared with 171.87 tons during the same period the previous year. This increased catch was in part due to the presence of skipjack tuna within the inshore waters for a brief period. No licences for foreign fishing vessels were issued. In April and November 2015, two additional local fishing businesses began fishing operations in the offshore waters of the 200 nautical mile maritime zone of Saint Helena. The Territory now has four vessels fishing the offshore waters within that zone. The vessels regularly fish the offshore seamounts, which provides much-needed throughput to the cold stores on the island. Saint Helena is finalizing a 10-year strategy that promotes a safe, sustainable and environmentally friendly fishing industry. In addition, in the period 2013-2014, Saint Helena exported 573.5 kg of Arabica Green-Tipped Bourbon coffee. Exports were 532.5 kg in the period 2014-2015, and 832.5 kg in the period 2015-2016.

D. Transport and utilities

10. In November 2011, the Department for International Development and Saint Helena approved the construction of an airport on Saint Helena. The construction is now complete and the airport has successfully attained certification as a category C airport from the regulator, Air Safety Support International. Contracts have been signed to manage operations for a 10-year period and to operate a single weekly service between Johannesburg, South Africa, and Saint Helena. Scheduled services were not launched as planned in May 2016, owing to turbulence and wind shear identified on the approach path to the main, northern end of the runway, during test flights in April. Since then, Saint Helena and the Department have been working intensively to better understand the wind conditions and identify how to mitigate the challenges that they present. The southern approach does not experience severe wind shear, but requires a tailwind approach. Data on the tailwind speeds, and in particular the frequency with which they exceed aircraft performance limits, are being collected.

11. According to the administering Power, the airport is open and operational: air traffic currently consists of private charter and medical evacuation flights. The Government of Saint Helena is seeking to establish a regular scheduled air service

[1] A dispute exists between the Governments of Argentina and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland concerning sovereignty over the Falkland Islands (Malvinas).

and is expected to commence procurement of an air service provider before the end of 2016, a process that will include the need for an air link between Ascension and Saint Helena. In the meantime, scheduled access to the island remains by sea using the Royal Mail Ship *St Helena*; the round trip from Cape Town, South Africa, takes 18 days, which includes the connecting voyage to Ascension. The vessel has been in service for more than 25 years. On 12 May 2015, the Executive Council approved the shipping schedule from April to July 2016 and the proposed booking policy for the final voyages of the vessel in view of the proposed official opening of the airport in 2016. This was subsequently extended to July 2017, including the Saint Helena-Ascension leg of the service. The construction of a wharf in Rupert's Bay is largely completed, with attention now turning to plans to make Rupert's Wharf operational. The wharf will enable the separation of cargo activity (to take place in Rupert's Wharf in the future) from passenger handling activity, which will continue in James Bay.

12. The Territory has some 168 km of paved roads (118 km on Saint Helena, 40 km on Ascension and 10 km on Tristan da Cunha) and 30 km of unpaved roads (20 km on Saint Helena and 10 km on Tristan da Cunha).

13. Saint Helena has two local radio stations and two satellite television stations that are rebroadcast terrestrially. Ascension has one local radio station and receives relays of broadcasts from Saint Helena. Broadcasts from the British Forces Broadcasting Service are available, as are television services for the United States military. Tristan da Cunha has one local radio station and receives television and radio broadcasts from the British Forces Broadcasting Service.

14. Saint Helena has benefited from upgrades to its electricity infrastructure. Wind power has become a reliable source of energy. A solar farm constructed and completed in May 2015 contributes some 10 per cent of the island's electricity and has a peak capacity of 500 kW. Further increases are planned.

15. The Department for International Development has provided funding for water infrastructure upgrades. Work currently funded and in progress is the increase in water storage through additional and improved reservoirs. Commercial recycling of waste is now required to maximize efficiencies and fully realize the benefits of the investment that was already made.

E. Banking and credit

16. The Bank of Saint Helena is the sole banking entity; it is a limited company, and the Government of Saint Helena owns the bank as a majority shareholder. It provides banking services and related financial services within Saint Helena and its sub-branch on Ascension through its core products: current, deposit and savings accounts; and personal, housing and commercial loans. The Bank offers various services, including teller services, an international remittance service and online banking services. A local debit card pilot programme was expected to be launched by the end of November 2016 with a view to rolling it out to all customers by February 2017.

17. In the communiqué adopted at the fifth meeting of the Overseas Territories Joint Ministerial Council, held in London on 1 and 2 November 2016, the overseas

territories and the United Kingdom reiterated their mutual determination to continue to tackle corruption, fraud, money-laundering, and the financing of terrorism and weapons of mass destruction and to further enhance transparency and law enforcement cooperation in the context of financial services. They also reiterated their shared commitment to providing the leadership necessary to meet the June 2017 deadline for the implementation of new arrangements regarding the exchange of beneficial ownership information on companies incorporated in their jurisdictions and to continuing to provide the highest levels of law enforcement cooperation possible before that date.

F. Tourism

18. According to the administering Power and the Government of Saint Helena, the new airport is the best way to bring new financial opportunities to the island and promote tourism. The rugged natural beauty of the Territory, its rare wildlife and its historic sites, such as Longwood House and Napoleon's tomb, are expected to attract visitors. Of the 3,536 passengers who arrived on the Royal Mail Ship *St Helena* in 2015/16, 712 were excursion (i.e., leisure) visitors. A further 596 visitors arrived on yachts and 5,768 on cruise ships. The anticipated increase in leisure visitors for 2016 did not materialize because of the delay in establishing regular commercial flights.

IV. Social conditions

A. General

19. According to the administering Power, following the reintroduction of the grant of British citizenship to Saint Helenians in 2002, the island experienced an exodus. The population census conducted in 2016 showed some recovery, with 4,203 Saint Helenians present on census night, an increase of 5.5 per cent from 2008. The increase in population began with the air access project, which has resulted in an increasing number of Saint Helenians returning to the island to take advantage of improved employment and business development opportunities. The results of the census show a total resident population of 4,534, in addition to 268 visitors, bringing the total number of persons present to 4,802.

20. Measured by international standards, Saint Helena is an upper middle-income Territory with few signs of real material poverty, according to information provided by the administering Power. Gross national income per capita in 2014/15 was estimated at £7,100 or $10,300 (international purchasing power parity). This is in line with the Territory's annual analysis of income from employment. A minimum income standard, introduced in July 2013, protects against poverty by providing an income-related benefit to households in receipt of income below this threshold. As at October 2016, 153 households were in receipt of income-related benefits, which represent 8.3 per cent of occupied dwellings. While poverty rates are low, there are growing concerns regarding relative poverty and income inequality as the economy grows.

21. The census showed the old-age dependency ratio on Saint Helena to be 35 per cent, with an overall age dependency ratio of 56 per cent. This places Saint Helena among the highest age dependency ratios in the world, with little potential for natural population change to remedy the situation in the foreseeable future. The ageing population has increased the need for substantial investment in a new care programme for older persons. As at October 2016, it was estimated that 20 per cent of the population, 938 people, were of 65 years of age or over, of whom 684 received the basic island pension. The population of older persons, classed as those of 75 years or older, is currently 7 per cent of the resident population, or approximately 325 people. Population projections show that these figures will continue to increase over the coming 10 years, with an average of 34 people a year reaching 65 years of age and 18 reaching of 75 years of age.

22. There is one general hospital in Jamestown, as well as four health clinics serving people living in rural areas, and two residential units providing care and support for individuals with learning and physical disabilities. Clinical areas in the hospital were partially refurbished in 2015-2016, with the installation of improved diagnostic capabilities (including a computed tomography scanner and radiography room), a two-bed intensive care unit and a new operating theatre and co-located delivery suite. In addition, the island has two family centres for children and young people who need protection and supported accommodation and two locations for vulnerable and older persons.

23. The *Wass Inquiry Report into Allegations Surrounding Child Safeguarding Issues on Saint Helena and Ascension Island* was published on 10 December 2015. The Wass Inquiry was commissioned by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office as a result of allegations made that child sexual abuse was endemic in Saint Helena and that the Government of Saint Helena, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Department for International Development were concealing child abuse. It found no evidence of endemic child sexual abuse, corruption, cover-up or tolerance of abuse on Saint Helena or Ascension. Nevertheless, according to information provided by the administering Power, it did find systematic and historical failings by the Government of Saint Helena, including failings in relation to the health and safeguarding of vulnerable people, and made recommendations, all of which were accepted by both the Governments of the United Kingdom and Saint Helena. Nevertheless, it also found evidence of significant progress having been made on Saint Helena and Ascension in relation to safeguarding. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office appointed a senior official of the Government of the United Kingdom to support the Governments of Saint Helena and Ascension in implementing the recommendations. A report was published in July 2016 and detailed the substantial progress made.

24. The Saint Helena Government Safeguarding Directorate is now fully operational and a key component of multi-agency working arrangements led by the Safeguarding Board. Following a request and the granting of an additional £2.7 million in total during 2014/15 and 2015/16 from the Government of the United Kingdom, key additional staff have been recruited, safeguarding training has been delivered and systems to improve border security and intelligence have been procured. Additional funding was also provided to improve services for vulnerable adults and for residential care. This has seen several services now delivered in the community, including a social club for vulnerable adults. Non-governmental

organizations have been supported to deliver appropriate activities and their representatives have also attended safeguarding training. Thanks to increased public confidence in the system, the number of referrals to social services and the police has increased significantly.

25. In the communiqué adopted at the fifth meeting of the Overseas Territories Joint Ministerial Council, the United Kingdom and the overseas territories, including Saint Helena, agreed to work together to conduct a review of reservations to core United Nations human rights treaties ahead of the preparation of the report of the United Kingdom under the universal periodic review conducted by the Human Rights Council, to be submitted in 2017. They also committed themselves to working together to further develop the capacity of territories' national human rights institutions, where established, in line with the international standards set out in the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (Paris Principles), and to deepening understanding of their shared obligations with regard to international human rights.

26. White Ribbon Day was celebrated on Saint Helena in 2016 with events at local schools with school-children wearing white and recreating the white ribbon symbol by gathering at the island's main sports field. A ceremony, attended by the Governor, was held on the afternoon of 25 November in Jamestown. It was open to the public to attend with a view to encouraging commitment to breaking the silence on domestic violence. The event included personal accounts from survivors of domestic violence with the theme of "Together we can end domestic violence". In mid-2016 a women's shelter was opened for survivors of domestic abuse.

B. Employment

27. A significant number of Saint Helenians are employed off-island, especially on Ascension, in the Falkland Islands (Malvinas)[1] or in the United Kingdom. Many contracts for such employment are for unaccompanied workers, resulting in a significant social burden and separated families. In addition, according to the administering Power, the loss of trained staff to better-paid off-island employment makes it necessary to bring in a range of internationally recruited staff in a number of sectors.

28. As a result of the construction of the airport, which began in late 2011, the demand for workers increased significantly. At the height of the construction phase, over 600 personnel were employed, of whom more than 400 were Saint Helenian. In November 2016, 279 personnel were employed on the project, of whom 118 were Saint Helenian. The release of workers from the project as construction neared completion benefited other sectors of the economy where labour-force availability had been a constraint. With only 15 individuals on average in receipt of unemployment allowance during 2016, equivalent to 0.5 per cent of the economically active population, the lack of additional labour-force capacity constrains growth in the private sector.

C. Education

29. Education is compulsory and free for children between 5 and 16 years of age. There are currently four schools in operation, comprising three all-through primary schools (for pupils aged 3-11 years) and one secondary school (for pupils aged 11-18 years). Pupils over 16 years of age may opt for academic or vocational courses accredited by the United Kingdom. Since September 2009, distance-learning opportunities have been included in the curriculum of the secondary school. The Education and Employment Directorate is also responsible for the training and retraining of employees in the public and private sectors, through its lifelong learning service. Work in this area was extended in 2016 with the opening of the Saint Helena Community College, which offers local access to a wide range of professional qualifications and higher education courses (to degree level) through blended learning. Students from overseas territories benefit from the home student rate for school fees at British universities provided that they have lived in a British overseas territory, the European Economic Area or Switzerland for the three years prior to the first academic year of their course of study.

30. Retaining qualified, experienced staff continues to be a challenge. Provisions are now in place to raise the overall quality of teaching through professional development. Internationally accredited qualifications are offered to current teaching staff through a partnership with a provider from the United Kingdom. According to the administering Power, a new salary structure for education now provides significant rewards for teachers who pursue improved qualifications. In addition, a new local initial teacher training programme offering accredited training through a United Kingdom university was established in September 2016.

31. Although there have been some gains in education outcomes in recent years, there remains considerable variation by year. In 2016, 22 per cent of pupils achieved five or more General Certificate of Secondary Education passes with a grade C or higher, including English and mathematics, compared with 49 per cent in 2014 and 18 per cent in 2015. A-level results have risen significantly, and in 2016 seven very successful A-level students, the largest such cohort in the Territory's history, were awarded scholarships for overseas study. Primary education standards have also improved in recent years, especially in reading, where 71 per cent of pupils achieved United Kingdom standards in 2016. Overall, however, primary standards still lag behind United Kingdom benchmarks, although work is underway to raise standards, especially in mathematics. Inclusion is a key focus within schools, with all schools sharing a commitment to providing opportunities for all pupils. Saint Helena offers robust programmes to support adult learners, with a range of academic and vocational courses offered through the Community College.

D. Environment

32. According to the administering Power, the isolated position of Saint Helena has given rise to an unusual and remarkable array of terrestrial and marine flora and fauna. Saint Helena has a high level of endemicity, and some 30 per cent of species endemic to the United Kingdom and its overseas territories are found there. As more baseline biodiversity surveys are undertaken and knowledge and understanding of

species increases, new endemic species may be found. The natural and cultural heritage of Saint Helena are its key assets and a key building block on which to establish its tourism industry, although both areas have been negatively affected by a lack of sustained investment. Saint Helena relies heavily on project funding to support conservation initiatives. In 2016, approval for three project bids was received totalling £589,523 from the Overseas Territories Environment and Climate Fund, also known as Darwin Plus.

33. While some waste management, for example hazardous-waste management, continues to be a challenge for the island, a capital-funded solid-waste management project has brought about improvements. In addition to a redeveloped landfill site, a public recycling facility has been established and the clean-up of homes and island areas has benefited from the introduction of a free service for the collection of bulk waste. Currently, most waste streams are still going to landfill, including commercially viable wastes such as metals, plastics and kitchen waste, although some glass and paper and cardboard are now recycled. According to the administering Power, there is a potential opportunity for the private sector to develop businesses that process and reuse waste materials.

34. In September 2016 Saint Helena declared the creation of a category VI marine protected area extending 200 nautical miles. In parallel, a marine management plan was published that prohibits any exploitation of the natural resources within the marine protected area that is not undertaken in a controlled, sustainable and environmentally sensitive manner.

35. In the communiqué adopted at the fifth meeting of the Overseas Territories Joint Ministerial Council in 2016, the Government of the United Kingdom and the overseas territories recognized the impact that climate change had on the economies, infrastructure and ecosystems of the territories and the important interest of the overseas territories in international efforts to combat and mitigate the effects of climate change. The Government of the United Kingdom committed itself to consulting with territorial Governments on the issue of the application of the Paris Agreement to the territories. It reiterated its full commitment to consulting the overseas territories ahead of its participation in international forums on climate change to ensure that their priorities were taken into account and to including them in delegations where appropriate, while welcoming the territories' links with regional and international organizations.

V. Ascension

A. Constitutional and political status

36. Executive authority for Ascension is exercised by the Governor of Saint Helena, Ascension and Tristan da Cunha. The resident Administrator is appointed by, and reports to, the Governor. The Governor is advised by the Island Council, currently comprising five elected members and three ex officio members: the Administrator, the Director of Resources and the Attorney General. Ex officio members have no voting rights. The current Administrator, Marc Holland, was sworn in on 26 August 2014. The Administrator represents the Governor of the

Territory, is the Head of the Government of Ascension and, as an ex officio member, chairs the Island Council in the Governor's absence.

37. Elections are held every three years, the most recent general election having been held in August 2016. All registered voters over 18 years of age are eligible to vote. Under the 2009 Constitution, the Governor, acting after consultation with the Island Council, may make laws for Ascension. Ascension has its own legislation but Saint Helenian law applies to the extent that it is not inconsistent with local law, insofar as it is suitable for local circumstances and subject to such modifications as local circumstances make necessary.

38. There are six full-time Saint Helena police officers on detachment to Ascension, including a senior officer with the rank of Inspector, who reports to the Chief of Police on Saint Helena. The Chief Magistrate on Saint Helena serves as the Magistrate on Ascension, supported by four local lay magistrates. The Saint Helena Public Solicitor provides legal advice to residents of Ascension and is supported on site by two local lay advocates and the Assistant Public Solicitor.

B. Economic and social conditions

39. Residence on Ascension is dependent upon employment and, consequently, according to the administering Power, the population of Ascension enjoys full employment (or they are dependants of employed people). It is currently estimated that 6 per cent (51 people) of the population are adult dependants who have accompanied their working partner. Residents of Ascension have no right of abode, although some have been on the island for more than 50 years and have children and grandchildren residing there, according to the administering Power. Services are mostly provided by the Government. A private sector company provides the water and electricity supply to most of the island, with the United States military base providing its own supply. There are no commercial exports and little indigenous food production apart from a newly established hydroponics facility set up by the Government. The economy is somewhat fragile and is dependent upon the defence and communication organizations based on the island. As a result of the economic situation and technological change, the population has fallen to under 900 people. Government activities are funded through, among other things, business levies, property tax, income tax and customs duties. The revenues raised cover the expenditure necessary for the provision of essential public services. There is a continued requirement to invest in the island's infrastructure, balanced with the need to create sufficient liquid reserves.

40. The sale of offshore fishing licences was placed on hold in 2014 and the Government introduced a new, improved, licensing regime at the end of 2015, alongside a large closed area (over 50 per cent of the economic fishing zone) as part of the United Kingdom government manifesto commitment to create a large marine protected area around Ascension. There has since been few applications for commercial fishing licenses in the open area. A few inshore fishing boats fish recreationally, provide the local community with fresh fish. Sport fishing continues to develop, bringing more visitors to the island each year.

41. Health services are provided through the fully functioning hospital in Georgetown. If treatment is not possible locally, cases are referred to the United

Kingdom. In support of a healthy lifestyle, there are two gyms on both military bases, three swimming pools and other sporting facilities that are available to islanders.

42. On 9 October 2015, the Governments of Ascension and Saint Helena announced that an air service providing a direct link between Ascension and Saint Helena would be available once the Royal Mail Ship had been decommissioned. Nevertheless, the opening of the airport on Saint Helena to commercial flights has been delayed while problems with wind shear are investigated and the *St Helena* has continued to provide a transport link between the islands.

43. The school in Two Boats provides education to all children from the age of 3 to 16 years old, which is the General Certificate of Secondary Education level. A safeguarding children board is in place and members include a social worker and representatives of the police and the health and education sectors. The employment of a full-time social worker has significantly raised standards. A special representative commissioned by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office concluded that Ascension had made good progress in implementing the recommendations of the Wass Inquiry into child safeguarding. Safeguarding standards are being aligned with the United Kingdom where appropriate, and policies and procedures are being implemented to support the standards. According to the administering Power, success has been noted in the regulating of and registering of childminders whose provision of preschool childcare is vital because there are currently no such facilities on the island. Community education and engagement across the wide range of community members also increases safeguarding awareness and access to a social welfare provision.

C. Environment

44. In its fifth national report to the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, submitted in April 2014, the United Kingdom noted that biodiversity on Ascension did not represent a great contribution to the local economy. Small amounts of revenue are created from tourists (through entry permit fees and wildlife tours), and visitors also come for sports-fishing holidays. The island has the second-largest nesting population of green sea-turtles in the Atlantic Ocean and the largest nesting population of any marine turtle species in all of the United Kingdom overseas territories. The biodiversity of Ascension is greatly threatened by alien invasive species and, in particular, by introduced plants and mammals.

45. The Conservation Department continues to develop and has succeeded in implementing several projects, such as programmes dealing with seabirds, invasive species, endemic plants, land crabs and marine conservation, including fisheries. Key project and research areas are set out within the Ascension Island biodiversity action plan. Partners in these projects are the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, Kew Gardens, the Darwin Initiative, the South Atlantic Environmental Research Institute, the Zoological Society of London, the Universities of Exeter and Birmingham and the Joint Nature Conservation Committee. Alongside the National Park of Green Mountain, there are six nature reserves, created to protect the island's critical flora and fauna. A biodiversity and fisheries committee, including members

from the Council, works with the Conservation Department and stakeholders in order to formulate legislation for the protection of the island's natural resources. A low volume of tourism is also developing within this sector. Work has begun to define the area to be covered by the marine protected area.

VI. Tristan da Cunha

A. Constitutional and political status

46. Executive authority for Tristan da Cunha is exercized by the Governor of Saint Helena, Ascension and Tristan da Cunha. The resident Administrator is appointed by, and reports to, the Governor. Sean Burns returned as the Administrator in December 2016. The Governor is advised by the Island Council, comprising the Administrator, who is the President of the Council, eight elected members (including the Chief Islander and at least one woman) and three appointed members. Elections are held every three years. All registered voters over 18 years of age are eligible to vote. Under the 2009 Constitution, the Governor, after consulting with the Island Council, may make laws for Tristan da Cunha.

47. Tristan da Cunha has its own legislation, but Saint Helena law applies to the extent that it is not inconsistent with local law, insofar as it is suitable for local circumstances and subject to such modifications as local circumstances make necessary. As a last resort, the laws of England and Wales apply. There are two special constables and one full-time police officer. The Administrator also serves as the Magistrate.

B. Economic and social conditions

48. The economy of Tristan da Cunha is based on traditional subsistence farming and fishing. Rock lobster is sustainably fished and exported to Australia, the European Union, Japan and the United States of America. The decision by the European Union in August 2014 to allow access to its market to lobsters from Tristan da Cunha was a major milestone.

49. Since 2007, Tristan da Cunha has enjoyed limited telecommunications. Internet access is now available to the community through an Internet cafe and a Wi-Fi system, although it is very slow. Options to improve connectivity are being considered.

50. In 2009, the Island Council set out broad strategies to secure the island's financial future. According to the United Kingdom, even with such reforms, the island would very soon become insolvent unless further drastic measures were taken. In 2011, a thorough review of budgets was undertaken and strict rules on procurement and expenditure were introduced. According to the administering Power, external financial assistance with infrastructure projects and capacity-building continue to be needed.

51. The Department for International Development funds the position of resident doctors. To build capacity on the island, it also funds several expatriate positions, including two clinical nurses, a finance officer, a commercial officer, teachers, a

social worker, the Director of Public Works and an agricultural adviser. The Department also sponsors annual dental and biennial optometrist visits as well as visits by other medical specialists and a vet, when required. It had been several years since the island's inhabitants had had access to off-island training, but, since 2012, the Department has funded training both on and off the island (the latter in the Isle of Man, Jersey and South Africa). This training has been provided across the Administration, covering the following areas: fisheries, tourism, post office services, public works, communications and information technology.

52. Pupils leave school at 16 years of age and tend to work in the Government or the fishing sector. They have no opportunity to proceed to higher education unless they leave the Territory. The current staff members are, by their own admission, not formally qualified. There are now five expatriate teachers in the school, with contracts ranging from six months to two years. The post of education adviser is currently vacant.

C. Environment

53. Tristan da Cunha is successfully implementing conservation projects with help from its partners, including the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds. The projects run by the Overseas Territory Environmental Programme include efforts to remove invasive species from uninhabited islands in the Tristan da Cunha group and studies on the feasibility of eradicating rodents. Tristan da Cunha also has a biodiversity action plan to help it to meet its commitments under the Convention on Biological Diversity. The plan was updated in 2012 to cover a five-year period until 2017. It was recently announced that Tristan da Cunha hopes to designate the pristine waters around the archipelago as a protected area by 2020.

VII. Relations with international organizations and partners

54. As a Non-Self-Governing Territory of the United Kingdom, Saint Helena, Ascension and Tristan da Cunha are associated with, but not part of, the European Union. The Territory is a member of the South Atlantic Territories Cooperation Forum.

55. Since January 2014, the Territory has been a partner of the European Union under Council decision 2013/755/EU of 25 November 2013 on the association of overseas countries and territories with the European Union, which was approved in an effort to move away from a classic development cooperation approach to a reciprocal partnership that promotes sustainable development and the values and standards of the European Union in the wider world.

56. At the fifth meeting of the Overseas Territories Joint Ministerial Council in 2016, the United Kingdom committed itself to involving Gibraltar and the overseas territories as it prepared for negotiations to leave the European Union, in accordance with their various constitutional relationships with the United Kingdom, to ensure that their priorities were taken into account.

VIII. Future status of the Territory

A. Position of the territorial Government

57. Information on political and constitutional developments regarding the status of Saint Helena is reflected in section I above.

B. Position of the administering Power

58. At the 7th meeting of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee), on 10 October 2016, during the seventy-first session of the General Assembly, the representative of the United Kingdom stated that the relationship of the Government of the United Kingdom with its overseas territories was a modern one based on partnership, shared values and the right of the people of each Territory to choose to remain British.

59. He went on to say that, since the publication in June 2012 by the Government of the United Kingdom of a white paper entitled *The Overseas Territories: Security, Success and Sustainability*, his Government had worked closely with the overseas territories to further develop those partnerships. At annual meetings of the Overseas Territories Joint Ministerial Council, the United Kingdom and the territories reviewed strategy and commitments and in 2015, the United Kingdom had affirmed its commitment to the advancement of the peoples of the territories, their just treatment and protecting them from abuses and the importance of promoting their right to self-determination. His Government's fundamental responsibility was to ensure the security and good governance of the territories and their peoples.

60. In the communiqué adopted at the fifth meeting of the Overseas Territories Joint Ministerial Council, the Government of the United Kingdom and the leaders of the overseas territories stated that the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, applied to the peoples of the overseas territories. They reaffirmed the importance of promoting the right of the peoples of the territories to self-determination, a collective responsibility of all parts of the Government of the United Kingdom. They committed themselves to exploring ways in which the overseas territories could maintain international support in countering hostile sovereignty claims. It was also stated that, should a Territory with a permanent population wish it, the United Kingdom would continue to support its requests to be removed from the list of Non-Self-Governing Territories. They agreed that the fundamental structure of their constitutional relationships was the right one — powers were devolved to the elected Governments of the territories to the maximum extent possible consistent with the United Kingdom's retaining those powers necessary to discharge its sovereign responsibilities. They also agreed upon the need to continue their engagement on those issues to ensure that constitutional arrangements worked effectively to promote the best interests of the territories and of the United Kingdom.

IX. Action taken by the General Assembly

61. On 6 December 2016, the General Assembly adopted resolution 71/116 without a vote, on the basis of the report of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples for 2016 (A/71/23) and the subsequent recommendation by the Fourth Committee. In that resolution, the Assembly:

(a) Reaffirmed the inalienable right of the people of Saint Helena to self-determination, in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations and with General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV), containing the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples;

(b) Also reaffirmed that, in the process of decolonization of Saint Helena, there was no alternative to the principle of self-determination, which was also a fundamental human right, as recognized under the relevant human rights conventions;

(c) Further reaffirmed that it was ultimately for the people of Saint Helena to determine freely their future political status in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter, the Declaration and the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly, and in that connection called upon the administering Power, in cooperation with the territorial Government and appropriate bodies of the United Nations system, to develop political education programmes for the Territory in order to foster an awareness among the people of their right to self-determination in conformity with the legitimate political status options, based on the principles clearly defined in Assembly resolution 1541 (XV) and other relevant resolutions and decisions;

(d) Stressed the importance of the 2009 Constitution of the Territory and the further development of democratic and good governance;

(e) Requested the administering Power to assist the Territory by facilitating its work concerning public outreach efforts, consistent with Article 73 *b* of the Charter, and in that regard called upon the relevant United Nations organizations to provide assistance to the Territory, if requested;

(f) Requested the administering Power and relevant international organizations to continue to support the efforts of the territorial Government to address the socioeconomic development challenges of the Territory;

(g) Stressed the importance of the Special Committee's being apprised of the views and wishes of the people of Saint Helena and enhancing its understanding of their conditions, including the nature and scope of the existing political and constitutional arrangements between Saint Helena and the administering Power;

(h) Called upon the administering Power to participate in and cooperate fully with the work of the Special Committee in order to implement the provisions of Article 73 *e* of the Charter and the Declaration and in order to advise the Committee on the implementation of the provisions under Article 73 *b* of the Charter on efforts to promote self-government in Saint Helena, and encouraged the administering Power to facilitate visiting and special missions to the Territory;

(i) Reaffirmed the responsibility of the administering Power under the Charter to promote the economic and social development and to preserve the cultural identity of the Territory, and requested the administering Power to take steps to enlist and make effective use of all possible assistance, on both a bilateral and a multilateral basis, in the strengthening of the economy of the Territory;

(j) Took into account the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including the Sustainable Development Goals, stressed the importance of fostering the economic and social sustainable development of the Territory by promoting sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth, creating greater opportunities for all, reducing inequalities, raising basic standards of living, fostering equitable social development and inclusion and promoting the integrated and sustainable management of natural resources and ecosystems that supported, inter alia, economic, social and human development, while facilitating ecosystem conservation, regeneration, restoration and resilience in the face of new and emerging challenges, and strongly urged the administering Power to refrain from undertaking any kind of illicit, harmful and unproductive activities, including the use of the Territory as a tax haven, that were not aligned with the interest of the people of the Territory;

(k) Requested the Territory and the administering Power to take all measures necessary to protect and conserve the environment of the Territory against any degradation, and once again requested the specialized agencies concerned to monitor environmental conditions in the Territory and to provide assistance to the Territory, consistent with their prevailing rules of procedure;

(l) Requested the Special Committee to continue to examine the question of Saint Helena and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its seventy-second session and on the implementation of the present resolution.